

at theatre works



SKATING IN THE CLOUDS THE CLOUDS

by clare mendes

4 - 14 DECEMBER | THEATRE WORKS

📍 theatre works, 14 acland street, st kilda

image by morgan roberts



ABOUT THEATRE WORKS

Theatre Works is an artist-first organisation and we exist to support emerging, established, local and national artists as they achieve their vision on stage with as little compromise as possible. We encourage risk-taking and live for new ideas.

MISSION

Theatre Works fills a vital niche in the Australian cultural landscape as an artistic home and destination for the ambitious, the new and the eminent.

VISION

To be the Australian epicentre of independent theatre and independent theatre makers by investing in, empowering and supporting artists of all experience, identity, background and aspiration to make ambitious works that reflect, redefine or reimagine contemporary Australia and contemporary Australian theatrical practice.

VALUES

ARTIST OVER ART

We believe in creating safe opportunities and environments for artistic and professional development in pursuit of individual artists and companies' own definitions of success.

EMPOWERING RISK

We believe that the future is defined by those who challenge the status quo. As such we partner with companies and artists that push the boundaries of content, form or scale.

CREATIVE FREEDOM

We get out of the artists' way.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

We value the longevity of our organisation, partnering artists and their careers, our planet and our art form. We prioritise the mental and fiscal health of our organisation and partnering artists.

DIVERSITY AND ANTIRACISM

We believe in a theatre and a theatre sector that is a true representation of the diverse world in which we live. We actively seek to create opportunities and pathways for marginalised communities.

THE TEAM

DIANNE TOULSON (she/her) Executive Director / Creative Producer

ADAM GARDNER (he/him) Marketing / Graphic Design / Box Office Manager

BELLE HANSEN (she/her) Company Producer

STEVEN MITCHELL WRIGHT (he/him) Front of House Co-Ordinator

LAURA HOOK (she/her) Venue Operations Manager

ANNE HENDERSON (she/her) Finance Administrator

ALANAH GUIRY (she/her) Access and Inclusion Coordinator

ANITA MEI LA TERRA Marketing and Producing Assistant

Theatre Works and Melbourne Writers Theatre respectfully acknowledge First People's sovereignty and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and storytelling by Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We pay our respects to the many clans and language groups in Victoria, to their elders past and present, and acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal peoples.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

SKATING IN THE CLOUDS

CREDITS

WRITER

Clare Mendes

DIRECTOR

Emily Farrell

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Ellie Nielsen

PERFORMED BY

Rebecca Morton
Katrina Mathers
Shamita Sivabalan
El Kiley

SET DESIGNER

Bianca Pardo

SOUND DESIGNER

Sharyn Brand

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Natalia Velasco Moreno

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Barbara Yazbeck

MOVEMENT COORDINATOR

Lucy Payne

PRODUCER

Clare Mendes

DRAMATURGE

Elizabeth Walley

PHOTOGRAPHER

Anna Moloney-Heath

PUBLICIST

Sassy Red PR

CONTENT WARNINGS

Suitable for audiences aged 15+
Intimacy, Themes of depression,
anxiety, self-harm, Climate
change, Haze, Strobe



SYNOPSIS

Summer and Autumn are in love, but there's a problem in their love nest. Autumn roams the house, spanner in hand, looking for a drip she can't see while Summer plans a spectacular skating party. With cracks emerging in their relationship, tough questions need to be asked. What if Julia Gillard doesn't like the ornamental ice vulture, or Penny Wong can't skate? And why is ice starting to appear on the floor of their St Kilda living room?

A modern fairytale that begins with salsa, pirouettes into the clouds and ends on a snow-capped mountain, **Skating in the Clouds** is an adventurous new work by playwright Clare Mendes. The recipient of a Malcolm Robertson Foundation grant, and featuring a creative team led by artists from Melbourne Writers' Theatre, this magic-realist romp draws audiences into the intricate relationship of Summer and Autumn – with its romance and arguments, dancing and dreaming – then takes you on their ride.

Powered by an all-female cast and crew, Skating in the Clouds pays special tribute to the unique strength and style of 50+ women. Finally, girls, a play written for Us!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to sincerely thank the following individuals and organisations for their support in the creation of Skating in the Clouds.

Otto McKinnon

our fantastic set-builder

Ella Davies

our energised videographer

Sophie Khavatsky & Isla Shaw

for kindly assisting with skills and items for 'Summer'

Our families and friends

for helping us to fulfil our artistic dreams

O'Brien Icehouse

with thanks to Deborah Sulser for lending us her figure skates

Amelia Mendes

Our incredible Captioner

The Hub, Docklands

for their warmth, support and excellent rehearsal space

City of Moonee Valley

Clare Mendes wishes to acknowledge Moonee Valley City Council for its financial support through the biannual grants program.

And for inspiration on how you can support the planet, please visit <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/10-ways-you-can-help-fight-climate-crisis>



CLARE MENDES

PLAYWRIGHT / PRODUCER

Clare wrote advertisements, radio plays, novels and Neighbours scripts before becoming a playwright. Skating in the Clouds is her fourth play, and the first in a series of epic, magic-realist, adventurous works to be created by an all-female cast and crew. Clare developed Skating in the Clouds with a grant from the Malcolm Robertson Foundation. The Company Manager of Melbourne Writers' Theatre, she also produces MWT's theatrical seasons. Away from the luxury of theatre Clare volunteers with the Alliance for International Women's Rights, empowering Afghan women through education. Clare loves poetry, boxing, birds, and nudging her audiences towards new thinking.



EMILY FARRELL

DIRECTOR

Emily Farrell (She/her), an emerging director and playwright and founder of Five by Five Theatre, is no stranger to the arts! With an acting background and degree in Acting for Stage and Screen, Emily is passionate about exploring all creative disciplines. In the last two years she has written and produced two stand-out reviewed shows, Broken Record and The Charade. In 2023 her creative endeavours led her to her directorial debut, Ohio! Inspired and hungry for more, Emily can't wait to work with the Melbourne Writers Theatre to create this truly stunning, thought-provoking piece of theatre, Skating in the Clouds.



ELLIE NIELSEN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Ellie is an author, actor and dramaturg. Her first book, Buying a Piece of Paris, was published by Scribe in Australia, Atlantic Publications in the UK and St Martins Press in the USA and Canada. Ellie's dramaturgy includes seven years at Playbox Theatre, Melbourne and five years assessing new Australian musicals for production house, Magnormous. She has contributed to the judging panels of OzMade Musicals and the Wal Cherry play awards. Ellie was last seen on stage in All Those Sunsets by Peter Rose at fortyfivedownstairs. She is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts Drama School and holds a Masters Degree in Creative Writing from RMIT.



BIANCA PARDO

SET DESIGNER

Bianca is a passionate Naarm-based designer and maker. Her extensive experience includes set and costume roles for A Streetcar Named Desire (Melbourne Theatre Company), Interiors (Rawcus), The Hate Race (Malthouse), Guys and Dolls, Passing Strange (Antipodes), Hamilton (Her Majesty's Theatre), TakeBack! (MAV), NGARNK: Giver of Life (YIRRAMBOI), Fucking A, Mad Forest (VCA); and Kenworth's Legacy (Moo Motion). Bianca was nominated for two Green Room Awards for her Guys and Dolls design. Bianca is thrilled to be a part of the Future Creatives Program at the Melbourne Theatre Company and the Besen Family Artist Program at the Malthouse, this year.



SHARYN BRAND

SOUND DESIGNER

Sharyn Brand is a sound based installation artist and collaborator whose practice draws from urban ethnography and research. She navigates and interprets the complexity of the world through an investigation of both sounds and silence. Her installations offer deep listening and uncover the hidden and forgotten through the nuance of spaces in between.

Sharyn's most recent works are but not limited to headphones pieces; Soundscape for Public art circus performance Momentum Arts Centre Melbourne for Alter State Festival (2022), and experimental & binaural Ephemeral Simultaneous Doubt at La Mama (2022). Sound design and composition; Conservatory (performed inside a conservatory 2022/3), Momentum at Bowery Theatre (2023) and Birth and Death of a Physical Performer at Arts House (2023).



NATALIA VELASCO MORENO

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Natalia brings over a decade of lighting design experience, spanning architecture, film, and theatre. Her portfolio encompasses projects in museums, galleries, and public spaces across Australia and overseas, as well as contributions to international cinematic productions, television, and independent theatre. Combining experience as a technician, rigger, and draftsperson, and having a background in art and painting, Natalia is driven by her passion for crafting immersive experiences through colour and form. Her primary focus lies in contemporary performance lighting, where she is interested in combining artistic expression with technical precision to bring narratives to life.



BARBARA YAZBECK

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

With experience in education, the arts and the community sector, Barbara joined the Melbourne Writers Theatre during the lockdowns in 2021 and has been a regular participant at workshops and readings. She was a participant in the In One Act program in 2021. The resulting script, 'Therapy' was performed by Quiet Roar as part of their Softly, Softly season 2023. Her monologue 'Juana, Regina' was performed as part of the Yarra Monologues in September 2023. She was also selected to participate in the Melbourne Writers Theatre's development program Page to Stage 2023 where she developed the script 'Immodest Acts' read at Theatreworks in November. Barbara was Stage Manager on the MWT's production of The Critical Marriage at Gasworks in 2023 and Jennie! at Gasworks in 2024.



LUCY PAYNE

MOVEMENT COORDINATOR

Lucy Payne (she/her) is a Naarm-based, queer, multidisciplinary creative focusing on urgent, politically engaged theatre that always has storytelling at its core. As an Intimacy Director she has trained with US-based Intimacy Directors & Coordinators International (IDC) whilst building her practical portfolio in Naarm. Lucy's previous acting credits include Unestablished (La Mama), Mi:Wi 3027 (La Mama), Exiles (FortyFiveDownstairs), An Indigenous Trilogy (La Mama), Bayou Bart (Theatreworks) and Hey is Dee Dee Home? A Punk Rock Sitcom (The Knack Theatre). As a creative her credits include My First Bike (La Mama), Me & the DOG (Melbourne Fringe), ADA (La Mama) and Pieces of Shit (Butterfly Club) among others. Lucy was part of the 2023 La Mama Pathways course for emerging playwrights.



REBECCA MORTON

PERFORMER

Rebecca Morton originally trained in Music Theatre at the WAAPA. She believes in the power of stories and songs to enlighten, uplift and transform the world. She has worked nationally and internationally in opera and theatre, musical theatre, circus, Shakespeare, and 60s rock and roll. She has toured several of her own shows, and played a great variety of characters of different nationalities with rising independent theatre companies. Most recently as an actor she has participated in the development of several new Australian works, runs two singing groups and takes clients in her therapeutic Breathwork practice in Castlemaine, and is currently offering a workshop as a practical resource for the enhanced wellbeing of the creative industry.



KATRINA MATHERS

PERFORMER

Katrina was a regular ensemble actor for the THE WEDGE (Ch10); FLIPSIDE (ABC TV) and weekly radio serial THE BREAKFAST SHIFT (ABC 774). A Moosehead Award recipient for The Melbourne International Comedy Festival Show FOOTY CHICKS, Katrina's credits also include playing the the lead in the telemovie ECONOMY CLASS (Ch7), the nurse in the original SAW short film and the depressed mum in the TONES & I music video for NEVER SEEN THE RAIN. TV credits also include lead guest roles on series such as: WILFRED, ALL SAINTS, CITY HOMICIDE, PRANK PATROL, BLUE HEELERS.



SHAMITA SIVABALAN

PERFORMER

Shamita Siva is a multi-faceted performer with a background in dance. Trained by prestigious institutions including Stella Adler AoA LA and 16th street, she also holds a BA of Performing arts. While completing her BA at Monash University, she developed an interest in physical theatre and studied Butoh, which greatly inspired a love for physical storytelling outside of dance. Shamita's talent shines on stage and screen. Recent theatre includes "The Marvellous Life of Carlo Gatti" (Theatreworks), "Nosferatu," (Malthouse) and "Crocodiles" (Darebin Arts).

She holds 'Best Supporting actor' awards for films "Dashboard Dogs" and "Someone Else." Recent features include "FOE" and "La Famiglia". Shamita also features in upcoming indie's "Single, Out" (S3) and "What Would We Do", and the upcoming Stan show "Good Cop, Bad Cop".



EL KILEY

PERFORMER

El Kiley is an English/ Australian actor based in Naarm. Graduating from Federation University Arts Academy in 2020, she has performed with the Australian Shakespeare Company as Rosalind in 'As You Like It' (2022), at Theatreworks in Wildefang Productions' 'The Marvellous Life of Carlo Gatti' (2022), in Baggage Productions 'Mad Women Monologues' (2022), in Five by Five Theatres 'Ohio!' (2023) and this year in her debut play 'Me and the D.O.G' at Melbourne Fringe Festival and Backyard Theatre Ensembles internationally touring show 'Fractured Love'. Her onscreen credits include 'Unpalatable' by GPOY Productions (2023) and 'Linda, Ellie & Char' by Elfenshot Films (2024).



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